

REMARKS

The drawings are objected to on the ground that Figure 6 is inconsistent with the written description of the COMMON terminal 23. The connection of the COMMON terminal 23 to the COMMON line 14 is, in fact, shown in Figure 2. This is recognized by the examiner in his requirement to add the reference numeral 23 at the paragraph bridging pages 4 and 5, which change has been made. In order to clarify the point, the specification has also been amended at the paragraph bridging pages 5 and 6 to add a reference to Figure 2.

Claim 6 has been objected to as lacking antecedent basis for the term “device.” The term has been changed to “system” to be consistent with claim 5, from which claim 6 depends. The same change has been made in claim 10.

In claim 13, “M-bit register” has been changed to “M-bit shift register” in accordance with the examiner’s requirement.

Claims 5-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite in the use of the term “node” and “nodes” in claims 5 and 8. Those words have been changed to “local controller” and “local controllers”, respectively.

Claims 1-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the published patent application of Wells, either alone or in view of Warrior et al., both of record. Wells qualifies as prior art only under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). At the time of applicants’ invention, applicants’ invention and the subject matter of Wells were owned by or subject to an obligation of assignment to, the same person. Accordingly, Wells is disqualified as prior art under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103(c) (see MPEP § 706.02(I)(3)).

Accordingly, it is believed that, as amended herein, claims 1-36 are patentable and the application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Attorneys for Assignee
55 East Monroe Street, Suite 4200
Chicago, Illinois 60603-5803
312-346-8000

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